United Nations A/62/740

General Assembly

Distr.: General
15 May 2008
English
Original: Spanish

Sixty-second session
Agenda items 15, 54, 55, 56, 58, 60, 61, 63, 64, 66, 72, 73 and 119

The situation in Central America: progress in fashioning a region of peace, freedom, democracy and development

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Assistance to survivors of the 1994 genocide in Rwanda, particularly orphans, widows and victims of sexual violence

Report of the International Court of Justice

Commemoration of the two-hundredth anniversary of the abolition of the transatlantic slave trade

Letter dated 14 May 2008 from the Permanent Representative of Nicaragua to the United Nations addressed to the Secretary-General

I have the honour to transmit to you a letter from President Daniel Ortega Saavedra (see annex) in response to the invitation which you sent him on 7 May 2008 to attend the High-Level Conference on World Food Security, to be held in Rome from 3 to 5 June 2008.

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I am also sending the Declaration and annex from the Presidential Summit on Sovereignty and Food Security: Food for Life, held in Managua, Nicaragua, on 7 May 2008, with the participation of heads of State and Government and high-level officials from Belize, Bolivia, the Dominican Republic, Ecuador, Guatemala, Haiti, Honduras, Mexico, Nicaragua, Panama, Saint Vincent and the Grenadines and the Bolivarian Republic of Venezuela.

I should be grateful if you would arrange for the circulation to Member States of the letter from President Daniel Ortega Saavedra and the Declaration of the Presidential Summit on Sovereignty and Food Security: Food for Life and annex under agenda items 15, 54, 55, 56, 58, 60, 61, 63, 64, 66, 72, 73 and 119.

(*Signed*) María **Rubiales de Chamorro**
Ambassador Extraordinary and Plenipotentiary
Permanent Representative

Annex to the letter dated 14 May 2008 from the Permanent Representative of Nicaragua to the United Nations addressed to the Secretary-General

Thank you very much for your letter of 7 May 2008; I share your concern about the constant and sharp rise in food prices which, as you rightly observe, constitutes a grave crisis which could lead to an increase in hunger and deprivation for millions of people from all continents, with all the resultant risks for the stability and development of numerous countries.

I agree that it is essential to draw up a plan of action covering immediate needs and long-term policies. I reiterate my willingness to maintain close contact with the special high-level task force which you have established, and to exchange proposals with it.

In Nicaragua, precisely in view of the seriousness of this situation, we coordinated an initiative for sovereignty and food security, holding ministerial and presidential summit meetings for 14 countries from Latin America and the Caribbean in April and the first week of May, which gave rise to proposals and declarations which are annexed hereto (see enclosure).

At the presidential summit meeting, the 14 participating countries agreed to continue to meet. The next meeting will take place in Mexico, at the end of May, in order to engage in further deliberations and formulate action.

I firmly believe that it is essential for countries and international bodies to attain agreements and carry out concerted action and that we must be prepared to reach firm conclusions in order to confront the problem.

I shall be present in Rome, from 3-5 June 2008, at the High-Level Conference on World Food Security organized by the Food and Agriculture Organization of the United Nations, and I hope to have the pleasure of speaking with you personally and exchanging views on the responsibility which we have, as human beings, to confront this challenge in an integrated manner, so as to ensure justice and achieve lasting solutions.

(*Signed*) Daniel **Ortega Saavedra**

Enclosure

Declaration

Presidential Summit on Sovereignty and Food Security: Food for Life

Managua, Nicaragua, 7 May 2008

The Heads of State and Government and high-level officials of Belize, Bolivia, the Dominican Republic, Ecuador, Guatemala, Haiti, Honduras, Mexico, Nicaragua, Panama, Saint Vincent and the Grenadines and the Bolivarian Republic of Venezuela, meeting on an emergency basis on 7 May 2008, in the city of Managua, at the Presidential Summit on Sovereignty and Food Security: Food for Life, with the aim of addressing our peoples' serious problems, made more acute by the accelerating increase in the cost of food, which has already provoked outbursts of social violence in various countries,

Determined to unite our efforts to confront the impact of the world food crisis in Latin America and the Caribbean.

Considering:

The Declaration of the Ministers of Agriculture and High-Level Officials of 11 Latin American countries, meeting on 26 April 2008 in Managua, which addressed the world food crisis, in particular that of the countries of Latin America and the Caribbean, and its consequences for the lives of our peoples, families and communities;

That the developed countries (the European Union, the United States of America and Japan) maintain a policy of subsidies to agricultural production of more than US$ 327 billion annually, which represents an average of 34 per cent of the agricultural income of those countries; it is reported that these subsidies account for 21 per cent of the income of United States farmers; 35 per cent of the income of European farmers; and 59 per cent of the income of Japanese farmers, seriously distorting international trade in agricultural and related products, and creating barriers to fair trade;

That the combination of these subsidies with the disproportionate increase in production costs and food prices aggravates those distortions and causes the greatest burden of the crisis to fall on the impoverished countries;

That the existence of various policy and agro-food programme initiatives in the region creates the conditions for complementarity in developing a common strategy. These initiatives, which include the Central American Agricultural Policy (PACA) for 2008-2017 and the agreement to implement cooperation programmes for sovereignty and food security within the framework of the Bolivarian Alternative for the Peoples of our Americas (ALBA), have the potential to bolster food production in the region;

That food, along with programmes for health, education and sustainable employment, are vital needs and fundamental rights which are indispensable for the survival and development of human beings and that therefore, in the just struggle to

exercise sovereignty and achieve food security, all types of taxes and/or speculation must be eliminated, and both producers and consumers of food must be protected;

That shortages and lack of food are making it increasingly difficult to accomplish the Millennium Development Goals (MDGs), including the eradication of extreme poverty and hunger, since they cause higher rates of malnutrition and have an adverse impact on health and the right to life for millions of human beings;

That the current crisis in food prices and availability results to a large extent from the existing international economic order and from economic policies that have an adverse impact on agrofood sustainability for developing countries;

That States have an obligation to respect, protect and guarantee the universal right to food through concrete action and measures to protect vulnerable social groups, in particular, and to provide the necessary means for them to feed themselves;

That the effects of climate change fall unjustly on the most impoverished and therefore the most vulnerable countries in Latin America and the Caribbean. Our countries produce only about 5 per cent of global emissions but we suffer directly from the gravest consequences of climate change, with its intense effects such as droughts, hurricanes and flooding, which are ever more frequent, prolonged and catastrophic;

That in the developed countries, there are proposals and programmes to use food for the production of fuel, thereby worsening the already critical food situation for many countries and peoples;

Agree:

To reject the industrialized countries' practices of agricultural subsidies and internal aid which have an adverse impact on the agriculture of impoverished countries and distort trade; and to prioritize the use of agricultural and related products to provide food rather than produce fuel;

To subsidize domestic agricultural production by small producers who have no access to credit through private or State banks. To help other producers with low interest credit from State banks;

To encourage private banks or the private sector in each country to allocate at least 10 per cent of their total loan portfolio to financing agricultural production;

To unite efforts to bring about an increase in sustainable food production and productivity, while respecting our traditions of production and consumption and protecting our resources, plants and seeds; recognizing the duty to restore and conserve nature and the environment; using local resources and creating better financial, technological and marketing conditions and improved inputs, organization and association, in a broad and inclusive manner, in accordance with the cultural characteristics of the countries of Latin America and the Caribbean;

To demonstrate concern about the dependency and inequality caused by the imposition of foreign technologies when these are controlled by monopolies;

To increase sustainable production and productivity, firmly promoting and encouraging ecological and organic agriculture and industry and their accessibility to low income sectors;

To coordinate the potential for achieving food security and ensure the supply of healthy and nutritious food, both domestically and regionally, as well as physical, social and regional access to sufficient food for everyone, while at the same time reaffirming that food must not be used as an instrument of political pressure;

To instruct the Ministers of Agriculture, Economy and Trade to draw up a programme of sovereign solidarity and food security containing a plan for immediate action, to be submitted within 30 days, identifying production potential and the indispensable resources for achieving a substantial increase in production, taking into account contributions from international bodies;

To prepare that plan of action in accordance with the principles of solidarity and cooperation between participating countries; complementarity and recognition of asymmetries; and equitable marketing between and within countries (fair prices for producers and consumers);

To establish a fund that would allocate all the necessary resources to develop food production, so as to provide financing, technology, tools, agricultural machinery and inputs to producers at fair prices and guarantee fair prices for both producers and consumers in the marketing of food products;

To urge the international community to increase substantially the levels and forms of cooperation and to reduce disbursement periods so as to mitigate the crisis;

In addition, to seek short term credit from international bodies so as to bring about a rapid increase in agricultural production;

To continue to support the action plan adopted at the United Nations Climate Change Conference, held in Bali in December 2007, so as to reach before 2009 a new agreement on global warming in which a true commitment is made, especially by the developed countries, to reduce greenhouse gases and to use technologies that are friendly to nature and the environment, and proposals are formulated for the financing of measures for crisis prevention and mitigation;

To promote production organization and association for small, medium and large agricultural producers, including women on a basis of equal rights, so that all of us may join in this common effort to ensure the sovereignty and food security of our peoples, boosting productivity and incorporating agrofood production as part of agro-industrial development, taking into account the obligation to repair and protect our Earth and our environment;

To allocate governmental resources to food production, especially of basic grains;

To endorse the importance of the Declaration of the 30th regional conference of the Food and Agriculture Organization of the United Nations (FAO), held in Brasilia in April 2008;

To endorse the importance of the convening by FAO of a High-Level Conference on World Food Security: the Challenges of Climate Change and Bioenergy, which will take place in Rome from 3-5 June 2008;

To endorse the agreements reached at the extraordinary meeting of the Council of Ministers of Health of Central America (COMISCA) held in Panama on 24 April 2008 and at the third inter-sectoral meeting of the Councils of Ministers of the Environment, Agriculture and Health held in the same city on 25 April 2008, aimed

at developing a focused regional strategy and plan of action on nutritional and food security to confront the crisis of rising food prices, complementing the strategy for intensifying food production developed by the Central American Agricultural Council (CAC).

To endorse the proposals made by the Government of the Bolivarian Republic of Venezuela which are annexed to the present Declaration for review by participants (see annex);

To endorse the initiative of the Government of Nicaragua in proposing a programme for sovereign solidarity and food security for the countries of Mesoamerica and the Caribbean, which, as a member of ALBA and the Central American Integration System (SICA), it presented at the most recent meeting of Ministers of Agriculture and High-Level Officials held here in Managua on 26 April 2008, and which is open to the inclusion of other countries of the region;

To accept the offer of the Government of Mexico to hold a high-level technical meeting at the end of May with the aim of discussing transfers of technology in the agricultural and related sectors. The terms of reference of that meeting were circulated at the present summit meeting;

To include the issue of sovereignty and food security in the agenda of the 5th summit meeting of heads of State and Government of Latin America and the Caribbean and the European Union, to be held in Lima, Peru on 16 May 2008;

To include the issue of sovereignty and food security in the agenda of the sixty-third session of the United Nations General Assembly;

To support a process of agrarian reform that would provide land to those agricultural producers who currently do not have that resource for food production;

To establish a consultative body and operational mechanisms in order to follow up the present agreements;

To declare an emergency for all Latin American and Caribbean countries so as to expedite the process of strengthening the production and productivity of consumer foodstuffs in the region.

Done at Managua, Nicaragua, on 7 May 2008.

Annex of the Bolivarian Republic of Venezuela

The Government of the Bolivarian Republic of Venezuela wishes to make the following proposals:

1. To establish a bank for agricultural inputs so as to reduce costs for small and medium producers;
2. To allocate US$ 100 million through the ALBA bank for the agricultural portfolio in order to fund projects which countries may submit;
3. To develop a special plan with PETROCARIBE for financing agricultural production by means of special fuel quotas to support production;
4. To strengthen the power of States by means of a special tax to create a special agricultural fund;
5. To control narcotics trafficking, in particular through the expropriation of lands used for narcotics trafficking;
6. To establish a centre for studies on strengthening agricultural production;
7. To call for the organization of a summit meeting of petroleum-producing countries to seek a petroleum-food formula for the creation of a special agricultural fund.